

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Fairmont Commercial Historic District

Fairmont, Robeson County, RB0540, Listed 4/7/2010
Nomination by Sybil Argintar
Photographs by Sybil Argintar, April 2009



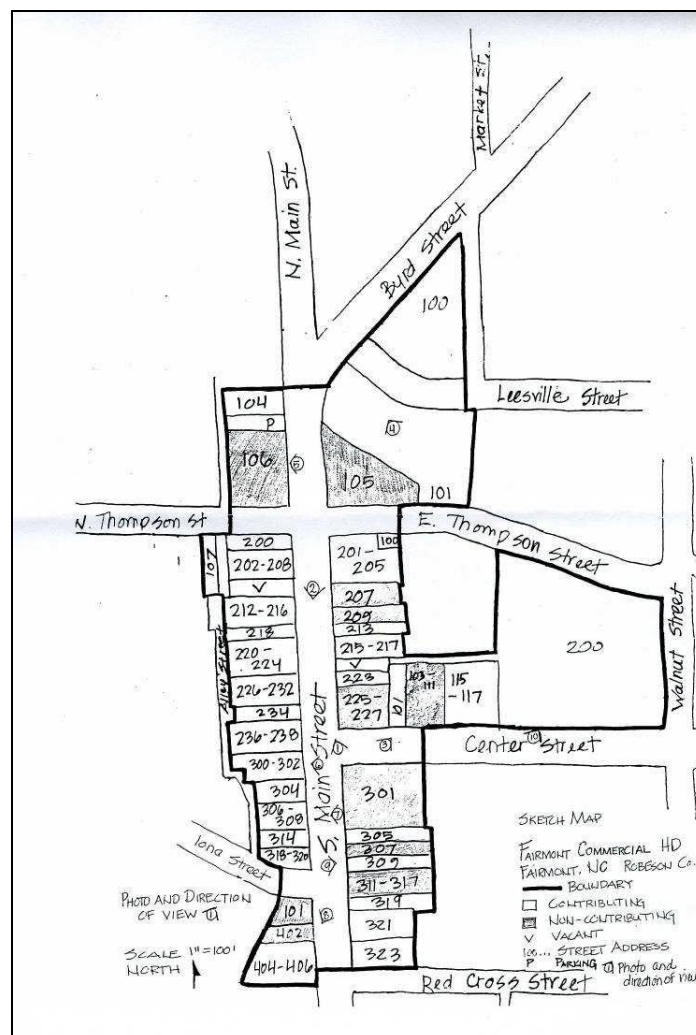
Main Street, west side, looking north



Fairmont Railroad Depot



Big Brick Warehouse, Center Street



Historic District Map

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of property

historic name Fairmont Commercial Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

Bordered roughly by Byrd Street on the north, Walnut Street on the east, Red Cross
street & number Street on the south, and Alley Street on the west not for publication N/A
city or town Fairmont vicinity N/A
state North Carolina code NC county Robeson code 155 zip code 28340

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination
request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional
comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<u> </u> entered in the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined eligible for the	_____	_____
<u> </u> National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined not eligible for the	_____	_____
<u> </u> National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> other (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Fairmont Commercial Historic District

Name of Property

Robeson County, North Carolina

County and State

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>31</u>	<u>11</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>31</u>	<u>11</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**N/A**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Commerce</u>	Sub: <u>business</u>
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>professional</u>
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>financial institution</u>
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>specialty store</u>
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>department store</u>
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>warehouse</u>
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>restaurant</u>
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>rail-related</u>

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Commerce</u>	Sub: <u>business</u>
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>professional</u>
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>financial institution</u>
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>specialty store</u>
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>warehouse</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>library</u>
<u></u>	<u></u>
<u></u>	<u></u>

7. Description**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style
Modern Movement
Italianate
No style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
roof asphalt
walls brick
stucco
other aluminum

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Name of Property

Robeson County, North Carolina
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or a grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1898 - 1960

Significant Dates

ca. 1898

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: Western Office, Archives and History

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 11 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing
1 17 673200 3818890
2 17 673210 3818750

Zone Easting Northing
3 17 673310 3818690
4 17 673300 3818600
X See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sybil H. Argintar, Preservation Planning Consultant

organization Southeastern Preservation Services date October 9, 2009

street & number 166 Pearson Drive telephone (828) 230-3773

city or town Asheville state NC zip code 28801

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Less than fifty owners; see list attached

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

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Fairmont Commercial Historic District
Robeson County, North Carolina

SUMMARY

The Fairmont Commercial Historic District is located in the town of Fairmont in the southern part of Robeson County, North Carolina. The historic district is roughly bounded by Byrd Street on the north, Walnut Street on the east, Red Cross Street on the south, and Alley Street on the west. Main Street runs north-south through the center of the district, with cross streets including Thompson, Center, and Iona streets. While the district is flat topographically, an unusual feature is a multi-stepped sidewalk, on the west side of Main Street, where the first-floor elevations are slightly higher than the street. Buildings are constructed of brick with flat roofs, are set back uniformly, and are mostly one or two stories in height. Architectural styles within the district are primarily Italianate and Commercial Style, with two examples from the Modern Movement. The large brick warehouse at the corner of Center and Walnut streets is an excellent example of industrial architecture. It was originally one of the largest tobacco warehouses in town and is still in use today as a farm and fertilizer supply warehouse operation. Outside of the district are residential areas to the west and south, with newer commercial sections to the north and east. At the north end of the district is the former railroad right-of-way, where the tracks have been removed.

The district, which encompasses approximately eleven acres, incorporates within its boundaries those buildings dating from the late 1890s through 1960, forming an intact collection of buildings representative of Fairmont's commercial development as one of the largest tobacco markets in the bright leaf market from the arrival of the railroad through 1960. The district overall has retained its architectural integrity, with only a handful of buildings demolished, minimal new construction, and most changes being at the storefront level as businesses have changed through the years.

The district consists of thirty-one contributing buildings, eleven non-contributing buildings, and three vacant lots. Of the non-contributing resources, the majority of these are significantly altered historic buildings, with only two that were built after the period of significance. If the upper façade is covered with modern materials or stucco, windows are retrofitted into original openings, or the storefront area is severely altered so that it no longer reads as a historic storefront, the building is considered non-contributing. Buildings which have only minor modifications to the storefront or the façade and date to the period of significance are contributing.

INVENTORY LIST

Buildings are listed alphabetically by street name. North-south streets have the west side listed first, moving north to south, and east-west streets have the north side listed first, moving west to east. Dating of buildings is based upon a 1914 electric service map of the town; the appearance of buildings on 1918, 1925, and 1940 Sanborn maps; documentary photos; newspaper articles; and owner questionnaires or interviews. These sources are noted in each entry. If the original owner or long-time business occupant of the building is known, that name is given to the property. Otherwise, properties are called by the property type such as commercial building or warehouse.

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Byrd Street, east side:

100 Byrd Street. Rawls Motor Company. Contributing. 1952.

This one-story modern building is square in massing, with two wings housing garage bays and a semi-circular single-car display window in the showroom on the front (west) elevation of the building. The showroom has a metal covering over the top one-third of the elevation, which wraps around to the northeast. The center portion of the roof is hipped, with a flat roof on the wings: a three-bay wing at the southeast corner and another which projects slightly to the northeast. Walls are stuccoed concrete block, and windows are multi-light, metal frame, and awning style with concrete sills. Several windows have been replaced with glass block at the northwest corner and on the south elevation. All garage bays have metal roll-up doors (Sanborn maps; owner information).

Center Street, north side:

101 Center Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.

Two-story Italianate-style brick building with a flat parapet roof with tile coping. There are two storefront bays on the first floor with retrofitted modern doors and windows set within brick infill, but the original openings are still clearly visible, based on documentary photos. Projecting rusticated brick pilasters demarcate the two separate storefront bays, and there is a decorative band of lighter brick at the cornice. There are three flat-arched window bays on the second floor with replacement fixed glass sash and stone sills. Projecting denticulated brick detailing forms an outline between and around the upper part of the windows, a design feature which appears on several other buildings in the district. The brick at the rear of the building is a lighter tan color, with all original openings filled in or altered for replacement windows. According to Sanborn maps, this building appears by 1925, replacing what appears to be a different building dating to ca. 1918. In 1925, there was a store in both sections, with a restaurant and a store in the building by 1940 (Sanborn maps; documentary photos).

103-111 Center Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1940.

One-story commercial brick building with a flat roof, originally four bays wide, has a single storefront bay on the west comprised of a display window and a single-light door with transom and a storefront with modern aluminum-frame display windows and entry door, along with a new brick apron on the east. The building is only minimally detailed, with brick corbelling at the cornice, some of which has broken away. At the rear of the west storefront there is a one-story brick wing and a shed-roof covering supported by wood posts which is attached to the building. The center two bays of this building have been recently removed, leaving only the eastern (#111) and western (#103) bays intact. The east wall of #103 has been replaced with concrete block. According to Sanborn maps, the current building first appears by 1940, replacing an earlier building from ca. 1918. Originally, the four-bay building housed stores, a restaurant, and a cleaners (Sanborn maps).

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115-117 Center Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1940.

One-story brick building with a flat, parapet roof has two storefront openings, and a replacement wood cornice. The brick is painted. The west storefront is set in its original recessed opening, but is infilled with brick, masonite siding, small multi-light windows, and a residential-style solid door. The east storefront retains more integrity, with its original recessed opening, display windows, and a replacement aluminum-frame entry door. There is a brick wall added to the west rear of the building, about two-thirds the height of the original section, and a shed-roof concrete block addition at the rear of the east side of the building (Sanborn maps; documentary photos).

Iona Street, south side:

101 Iona Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1970.

This one-story modern flat-roof brick building with metal sheathed walls is contiguous to other buildings to the south, but is set back from the street. According to ca. 1952 photographs, it replaces an Esso service station at this corner (documentary photographs).

South Main Street, west side:

104 S. Main Street. McDaniel Hardware. Contributing. 1949, addition ca. 1954.

This two-story, flat-roof, brick building with terra cotta coping has one wide storefront bay on the first floor with a recessed entry framed by plate glass display windows, and brick aprons. There is a flush board ceiling at the entry. The second floor has four bays, each holding a metal-frame multi-light window with concrete sills. To the north is a one-story brick addition which originally housed a grocery store but was joined, on the interior, to this building in the late 1950s. It has a single bay of aluminum-frame display windows and a metal awning. To the rear of the building is a one-story, shed roof concrete block addition which extends across most of the rear elevation, as well as a freight elevator tower at the southwest corner. Documentary photos dated ca. 1950 show the two-story building there but the one-story addition does not appear until a 1954 photo. In the 1950s, this was the location of McDaniel Hardware (Sanborn map, documentary photographs; interview with Curtis McGirt; owner information).

vacant lot

106 S. Main Street. Southern National Bank Building. Non-contributing. 1963.

This two-story brick Modern commercial building is square in massing with bands of narrow vertical windows framed at the top and bottom by colored aluminum panels on the second floor. The entry facing Main Street is recessed, with a double-leaf, aluminum frame door with transom and sidelights. The rear entrance also has a modern aluminum frame door with transom and sidelights, but it is flush with the building and has a shed-roof hood. The north elevation retains a square single-light window which was the former bank drive-through. The bank moved into this building in 1963, after a grand opening on June 10, 1963. The building was donated by the bank to the town and is now in use as the Hector MacLean Public Library (interview with Curtis McGirt).

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200 S. Main Street. Floyd and Floyd. Contributing. 1960.

This one-story, flat-roof, brick Modern office building was built after a fire in 1959 destroyed the restaurant previously located on the same lot. The front of the building has a recessed entry, with vertical board sheathing, at the northeast corner, sheltering an ashlar planter in one corner, a large picture window with corrugated glass, and the door at the north end. A band of concrete separates the entry from the upper wall of the building, extending into a pierced concrete wall on the north end. On the south end of the façade is a narrow two-light horizontal window framed in concrete. The north elevation of the building has five bays, consisting of square glass block-filled windows and two entry doors. The door furthest to the west, under a flat metal awning, was originally the entrance to a barber shop, but is now part of the current office. The rear of the building is concrete block (Sanborn maps; owner interview; interview with Curtis McGirt, town historian and collector of documentary photographs; January 21, 1959 newspaper article; interview with Charles E. Floyd, whose grandfather built the building in 1960).

202-208 S. Main Street. O. I. Floyd Store Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.

This one-story brick building with a flat parapet roof and tile coping has three separate storefront bays, one on the south and two smaller ones on the north. The south side of the building is painted, and there are recessed brick panels at the cornice with a row of angled brick above and corbelling at the cornice. The south storefront has nearly all of its original configuration and materials, including two single-light-over-panel recessed entry doors in the center flanked by display windows, a full transom, and brick aprons. The north storefronts do not retain their original configuration, and some modern materials replace the original, including T-111 siding on one of the entries, and replacement doors on the other. The south side has an off-center door and the north side has a recessed central door flanked by display windows. Awnings have been added at both storefronts. The rear of the building has six bays, with flat arches above all openings. There are two doors flanked by multi-light, metal-frame awning windows with bars over them. One of the original uses of this building was the O. I. Floyd furniture store at #208. A 1951 photograph notes that Fairmont Bakery was located here. It is not known what other businesses were located in the building (Sanborn maps; signage on wall; documentary photographs)

vacant lot

212-216 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1914.

This painted, two-story, flat parapet roof, painted brick Italianate-style building has particularly notable brick detailing around the windows consisting of raised bands which outline the upper parts of the window and brick molding with dentil blocks below. There is corbelling at the cornice and above the storefronts and brick pilasters delineate the north and south ends of the building as well as the area between storefronts. Window details on this building are nearly identical to those of 101 Center Street, and may have been built by the same builder. Second-story flat-arch windows on the south side are one-over-one, and windows are boarded over on the north. The south storefront has been modernized with aluminum framing around doors and windows, has new brick aprons, and a shingled awning. The original configuration, with recessed entry, appears intact, and there is a door to the second floor on the north side. The north storefront also retains its original configuration, but the recessed door is a

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replacement surrounded by vinyl siding in the opening, and the transoms are boarded over. A new brick wall has been added, and painted with a mural, on the north elevation where the building to the north was torn down. There is a small one-story addition in the center of the rear, covered with T-111 siding, and a substantial two-story-plus-basement brick addition (not visible from the street) on the south side of the building with metal-frame, multi-light casement windows with sidelights and transoms, along with some replacement sash. All additions were added by 1940, according to Sanborn maps. Sanborn maps from 1918 note a general store and a hardware store, two stores in 1925, and in 1940 a store on the north side and the Weinstein Clinic on the south side. A 1951 photo notes that a hardware store was located in the building, along with Webster Drugs (1914 electric service map; Sanborn maps; owner information; documentary photographs).

218 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.

This simple one-story striated brick building with a flat parapet roof and tile coping has a single storefront bay and no additional detailing at the upper façade other than a row of soldier course brick at the cornice. The storefront retains its original recessed entry configuration, but has new aluminum framing, metal aprons and a metal shed awning. The rear of the building is three bays wide with a modern aluminum frame door in the center flanked by two boarded-up window openings. The 1925 Sanborn map lists a shoe repair shop in this building and notes that floors are concrete. The 1940 map notes a retail store in the building. A 1951 photo shows Cole's Grocery here (Sanborn maps; documentary photographs).

220-224 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.

This one-story brick building with a flat parapet roof has three distinct storefronts, with the southernmost being slightly narrower than the other two. The cornice of the building has some corbelling and there is an inset brick panel in all three bays with a band of angled brick. All three storefronts have been altered with modern materials including new brick walls approximately half way up the storefront opening, new aluminum frame doors and covered transoms. There is a flat metal awning to the south and a shed metal awning to the north. The rear is eight bays wide, and from north to south, mimics the dimensions of the front of the building. There is a modern door framed by eight-over-eight windows at the north and center, and a modern door with one eight-over-eight window on the south side. Both the 1925 and 1940 Sanborn maps note that there were stores in all three sections of the building. The current owner of 224 S. Main Street, David Musselwhite, notes that there has been a barber shop in that location since the building was constructed. A 1952 photograph shows that Fairmont Sport Shop was located in 222 S. Main Street, and Fairmont Grocery was located in 220 S. Main Street. Mr. Musselwhite also noted that a Dr. Brown built this building along with the building to the south, 226-232 S. Main Street, and the buildings to the north, 212-216 S. Main and 218 S. Main (Sanborn maps; owner information; interview with David Musselwhite).

226-232 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1914.

This two-story brick Italianate-style building is one of the earliest ones on Main Street, but has several alterations. The storefronts have been altered but the upper façade is intact, including elaborate brick corbelling at the cornice and over the flat-arch windows. The windows on the south portion have

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replacement sash that have been retrofitted into the openings, but the original one-over-one windows remain on the north side. The southern storefront has a recessed entry, but the entry has been sheathed in weatherboard with one-over-one windows in the display area, along with a modern door with sidelights. The northern storefront has a recessed entry, stucco around the storefront opening, boarded up transom, a modern door to the second floor, modern aluminum framing around display windows and door, and a flat metal awning. The rear of the building has six bays on the first floor, four of which are bricked-in window openings and two which are modern doors. The second floor also has six bays, with three one-over-one windows on the north and three two-over-two sash on the south. Based on the documentary photos, it appears that this building replaces two of the ca. 1904 buildings in this same block. It is possible the original facades were re-worked, but this is not likely, since they are quite elaborate. The 1918 Sanborn map indicates that there was a hardware store in 232 S. Main Street and a drug store in 236 S. Main Street. The 1925 map notes a store in 232 S. Main Street, the drug store in 236 S. Main Street, and a Masonic lodge on the second floor. The 1940 map notes stores in both sections of the building. The south side of the building has a faint sign noting "Johnson radio and t. v. service, sales, repairs, installations", but the date of this business is unknown (1914 electric service map; Sanborn maps; documentary photos).

234 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1914; alterations 1940s.

This two-story brick building with a flat parapet roof and tile coping has a single storefront and four window bays on the second floor, all of which have twelve-over-twelve sash. The brick around the storefront opening appears to be new, but the recessed configuration is still intact. There is a shed shingled awning across the width of the storefront. The rear of the building indicates the date is older since all openings are arched with windows retrofitted into the openings. There is a one-story painted brick addition with a flat parapet roof and tile coping, which was built by 1940, according to Sanborn maps. Based upon a 1930s photo, it appears that this building originally had a façade like the adjacent building to the north, 226-232 S. Main Street. Brick detailing was removed, and the façade was stuccoed sometime after this photo, but before the early 1950s, when it appears as it does now with a stuccoed façade in a photograph. The 1918 Sanborn map notes this was a general store, with just "store" noted as the use in 1925 and 1940 (1914 electric service map; Sanborn maps; documentary photos 1930s and 1950s).

236-238 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. 1904; alterations 1940s.

This two-story brick building has two distinct storefront bays and seven window bays on the second floor. Windows on the south side are twelve-over-twelve sash, and two-over-two sash on the north. Physical evidence points to the building dating to an earlier date than its façade. Both flush storefronts have been modernized, the one on the south with anodized aluminum window and door framing, new cloth awning, tile aprons, and modern double-leaf doors, and the one on the north having new aluminum framing and a flat metal awning. The transom has been covered. The rear of the building on the north has a one-and-one-half-story brick addition, with the wall sloping down from south to north. There is a loading door at the northwest corner, and the addition is covered in metal panels on the upper portion. Original arched window openings are visible, with an original two-over-two window still present. The south side of the

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rear elevation has a two-story modern brick addition with a projecting one-story entry vestibule at the northwest corner. Documentary photos and newspaper photos indicate that this building was constructed in 1904, with the façade changed in the 1940s. The physical evidence for this is clear in the field when examining the brick at the rear of the building, which is much older than the front, as well as the presence of arched openings at the rear. The best evidence, however, is the 1930s photo which shows the 1904 buildings intact, before the 1940s façade change, which appears in a 1940s photo. The three 1904 buildings to the north (234 and 226-232 S. Main Street) were apparently replaced by this time. According to a photo, in the 1940s, Fairmont Drugs was located in 238 S. Main Street, a use which continued into the 1950s. In the 1950s, Lee's Stores, Inc. was located in 236 S. Main Street. Photographs from the 1990s indicate that Rexall Drugs was located here (Sanborn maps; documentary photos).

300-302 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1910.

This two-story Italianate-style, flat parapet roof building is one of the most architecturally intact in the district. The façade has contrasting brown brick molding outlining the upper portions of the windows, pilasters at either end of the façade and at the storefront divisions, as well as at the transom level. A row of dentil blocks is located above the storefront, below the sign panel, and over the second-story windows, and a projecting brick soldier course is at the cornice. The elaborate brick detailing on this building is similar to that found on 212-216 S. Main Street and 101 Center Street. The north storefront, in particular, has a high degree of architectural integrity in terms of configuration and materials, including a double-leaf glass-over-panel door and brick aprons. The south storefront has most of its original recessed storefront, but the window framing is newer and the transoms are covered. There are flat metal awnings on both storefronts. Windows on the second floor are eight-over-eight sash on the north and one-over-one sash on the south, with the upper sash painted. At the rear, there is a one-story concrete block addition on the north side, and all rear window and door openings are arched. All but one of the windows are boarded and the door is a replacement. The 1918 Sanborn map notes a general store in 300 S. Main Street, and a clothing store in 302 S. Main Street, with stores listed in 1925 and 1940. In the 1950s, Robeson Hardware was located in the building, with the sign still intact above the north storefront. In the 1990s Hotpoint Appliances was located here (Sanborn maps; owner information; documentary photos).

304 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925; alterations ca. 1950.

This two-story brick building with a flat parapet roof has a denticulated cornice with a soldier course below. The two storefront bays have been altered with walls covered with aluminum siding built where the display windows would have been, containing added six-over-six windows. There are two separate modern entry doors, recessed from the street. The windows on the upper floor are later horizontal-two-over-two replacement sash. There is a flat metal awning which extends across the full width of the building. The rear of the building has two arched door openings, one arched window, and two additional windows on the first floor, all of which are infilled with concrete block. There are three arched openings on the second floor, all of which are also filled with concrete block. The 1925 and 1940 Sanborn maps indicate there was a store in this building, but the specific type of business is not noted. It appears, based on a 1930s photo, that the current façade is a later addition, dating to ca. 1950, since the detailing of the front is different in the documentary photo (Sanborn maps).

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306-308 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1914.

This one-story brick building has a flat roof with parapet, and elaborate brick corbeling at the cornice, similar to the detailing on 226-232 S. Main Street to the north, and 314 S. Main Street to the south. The brick is painted on the north side. The south storefront has been modernized with anodized aluminum window framing, a new door, and covered transom, but the north storefront is more intact, although with the addition of carrara glass to the aprons in the 1940s. The original configuration is intact, including the transom. There are flat metal awnings on both storefronts. The elaborate brick detailing on this building is also similar to that found on 212-216 S. Main Street and 101 Center Street. The 1918 map indicates there was a drug store in 306 S. Main Street and a wholesale grocery in 308 S. Main Street. In 1925 and 1940, there was a store in 306 S. Main Street and a restaurant in 308 S. Main Street (1914 electric service map; Sanborn maps; documentary photos).

314 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.

This two-story Italianate-style brick building has a flat parapet roof and elaborate brick corbeling at the cornice and above the windows, much like 226-232 S. Main Street. It retains its original storefront, including configuration, with the only changes being the application of plywood over the aprons and the painting of transom windows. A single-light-over-panel door with transom to the second floor is on the south side. Windows are the original one-over-one sash. The rear of the building has four bays on the first and second floors, with one bay on the first floor bricked in. The second floor has two-over-two windows. Photos from the 1950s show Bullock's Jewelry and Forrester's Men's Wear as businesses that were in the building (Sanborn maps).

318-320 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925; alterations 1980s.

This two-story Commercial Style brick building wraps the corner of S. Main and Iona streets. Brick corbelling with a band of recessed brick below extends from the façade around to the south elevation. There are two distinct storefront bays, but they have been modernized with multi-light display windows, probably a 1980s change based upon the modern framing and configuration of the multi-light display windows. There are six window bays on the second floor, all with replacement fixed multi-light or nine-over-nine sash. Original keystones and concrete sills remain. On the south elevation, there are five bays on the first floor, with one of the window bays bricked in. A modern door has been added, replacing a window, and the window openings have concrete sills and keystones as on the front. The second story is three bays wide, with one window boarded up. Windows here are also replacement fixed sash. The rear, which has been stuccoed, has all openings boarded up with a loading door on the first floor. The 1925 and 1940 Sanborn maps note a bank and store in this building. In the 1950s, McRae Grocery was in 318 S. Main Street, and Stanley's Jewelers was in 320 S. Main Street (Sanborn maps; documentary photos).

402 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1918; alterations 1960s.

Modern alterations to this one-story commercial building, likely done in the 1960s, make it a non-contributing resource. The original stepped parapet roofline remains on the north elevation, but the

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building has been stuccoed, the storefront has been modernized and there is a heavy shingled pent roof added to the front (Sanborn maps; documentary photos).

404-406 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.

This massive brick Commercial Style building with a flat parapet roof, tile coping, and a lighter color soldier course below the corbeled cornice, is another highly intact building in the district. It has two storefronts in four bays on the first floor which are delineated by brick pilasters that extend halfway down the façade, with a triangular concrete base which creates an arrow motif. The south storefront has an original recessed entry flanked by large display windows in separate bays, with a tin ceiling in the entry and original leaded glass transoms. The storefront on the north is flush with the façade. This configuration has a double-leaf door with plain glass transom flanked by display windows with a taller brick apron. Lighter color brick in a soldier course is located below and above the windows on the second floor. In addition, all windows are framed by lighter brick, much the same as on the building located at 321 S. Main Street, and all have concrete sills. The rear of the building has eight bays on the first floor, with original one-over-one windows in some openings and two sets of double-leaf single-light-over-panel doors. The second floor has nine bays, with plywood covering all of the window openings. The original use for this building was as a furniture store (Sanborn maps; owner information).

South Main Street, east side:

105 S. Main Street. (former) United States Post Office. Non-contributing. 1962.

This Modern one-story brick building with a shallow front-gable roof has multi-color aluminum panels on the façade that are original to the building, framed by brick which projects forward on the north side. The off-center entry door is aluminum frame and double-leaf. Windows on the east, north and south elevations are multi-light, metal frame with concrete sills and some painted sash. The north side has one-over-one windows, and the east side has both multi-light, as noted, and fixed single-light windows with no sills. An original door is infilled with brick on the south elevation, and there is an enclosed flat-roof wing, with the roofline extending past the end wall, at the southeast corner of the building which appears to have originally been an open loading area. This building was built as the post office for the town in 1962, according to the dedication plaque which was on the building until it changed uses, and is now housed in the town museum. It served as the post office until the current one to the west was built in 1999 (Sanborn maps; plaque in town museum).

201-205 S. Main Street. A. L. Jones Building. Contributing. 1912.

This Italianate-style yellow brick building with a red brick façade, is two stories on the north and three stories on the south, with highly decorative brick corbeling at the cornice and framing the upper part of the windows (the same detailing as seen on several other buildings on Main Street, including 101 Center Street and 300-302 S. Main Street. Windows have corbelled hoods with dentil blocks and protruding bands of brick that follow the outline of the upper part of the windows. Windows on the north side have corbelled hoods only, and window openings everywhere else are unornamented. The two-story section is seven bays on the second floor, with a stepped parapet, and the three-story section is four bays on each of

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the upper floors. Windows throughout the building are boarded, but all original openings remain. There are three separate storefront bays, the most elaborate and intact of which is at the north end, which originally housed a bank. This storefront has its original double-leaf, single-light-over-panel doors framed by display windows and brick aprons with elaborate corbelling. The other two storefronts have been slightly modernized with aluminum framing and tile aprons, but their original configuration and recessed entries remain intact. There is a door to the second floor at the south end of the building which is boarded. The north elevation has eight bays on the first floor and seven on the second, with two doorways on the first floor. All window and door openings are boarded. Newspaper articles date this building to 1912, built as the A. L. Jones Building. It appears in a 1916 photo as the Jones Building, with Bank of Fairmont occupying the first floor of the north half of the building. The 1918 Sanborn map verifies this, with the bank noted in the first floor of the two-story north half, and a meeting hall on the second floor. A clothing store and variety store were in the three-story section to the south, with offices on the second floor and a meeting hall on the third. The 1925 Sanborn notes there was a store with a post office at the rear in the north section of the building, and a hall on the second floor; the three-story section was vacant on the first floor, with a meeting hall on the second and third floors. In 1940, there was a store in the first floor of the north half, and a meeting hall on the second, with a post office in the front and town offices at the rear of the first floor of the south section; a meeting hall was located on the second and third floors. Signs painted on the brick walls note there was a furniture and appliance store in the building, as well as the Johnson Cotton Company, but the dates are unknown. Local oral history recalls that one of the meeting halls on the upper floors was used as a basketball court in the 1950s. The most recent use of the building has been Fairmont Department Store (Sanborn maps; documentary photos; newspapers; owner information; interview with Curtis McGirt).

207 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. 1965; alterations 2008.

One-story building with brick on the lower half and stucco on the upper half with applied window openings. An awning extends across the full width of the first floor. The rear of the building is all brick, with no fenestrations. This building was constructed in 1965, replacing two earlier buildings. The remodeling into the current use as the Heritage Center took place in 2008 (Sanborn maps; documentary photos; interview with Curtis McGirt, July 2009).

209 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1918; alterations 2008.

This two-story commercial building with a flat roof, connected to 207 S. Main Street to the north as part of the Heritage Center, has been significantly altered on the façade and is a non-contributing resource. Alterations include retrofitting of display windows with smaller windows on the front, replacement of the center entry with a retrofitted display window, and retrofitting of new window sash into the original openings on the second floor. Some original features do remain on the building, including the segmental arches over all openings and original window openings which are bricked in on the east, north, and south elevations. The rear of the building is partially covered by a large one-story brick addition and handicap ramp. Sanborn maps from 1918 to 1940 note there was a store in the building. Riff's Department Store, one of the occupants in the 1950s, sold to Pope Stores in the 1960s (Sanborn maps; documentary photos; interview with Curtis McGirt, July 2009).

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213 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.

This one-story brick building with a flat roof has decorative brick molding and corbelling, similar to the detailing across the street at 226-232 S. Main Street. The storefront bay has been altered by the addition of metal panels, permastone apron, a modern door, and a flat metal awning. The rear is two bays wide, with a board door and a retrofitted window in the bricked-in original opening. The 1925 and 1940 Sanborn maps note that a retail store was located in the building (Sanborn maps).

215-217 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1914.

This one-story, flat roof brick building has two storefront bays and decorative angled brick detailing at the cornice. The south storefront is highly intact, with notable pierced brick aprons and a modern replacement door at the recessed entry. The north storefront has been modernized, with the addition of a permastone apron, and modern display windows and door which are now flush with the façade. The south wall has been replaced with concrete block, painted with a mural, where the building to the south was removed. Metal shed awnings have been added to the storefronts. There is a one-story concrete block addition on the north end off the rear of the building, and infilled arched openings are visible on the south end. In 1918, a variety store was located in 215 S. Main Street and a millinery in 217 S. Main Street. Stores continued to occupy the building in 1925 and 1940 (1914 electric service map; Sanborn maps).

vacant lot

223 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1914; alterations 1960s.

This one-story painted brick building has a single storefront bay and slight brick corbelling at the cornice. The north wall is a concrete block replacement, painted with a mural, where the building to the north was removed. The storefront has been altered with new display windows and entry door with a slightly angled recess, and a flat, metal awning. There is a rear entry door. The 1918 Sanborn map notes there was a variety store in the building, with stores continuing to occupy the space in 1925 and 1940 (1914 electric service map; Sanborn maps).

225-227 S. Main Street. Sam Dunie Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1914; alterations 1960s.

This tall one-story brick commercial building with three storefronts has had several alterations dating from the 1960s on the front, the most notable of which is the stuccoed façade, which makes this building a non-contributing resource. The storefronts have also been modified, with new doors and display windows alternating across the elevation. There is a flat-roof metal awning which extends out over the sidewalk. The south elevation of the building presents a clearer view of the building's original appearance. It was constructed of tan brick with a concrete water table, recessed brick panels at the cornice, high multi-light horizontal windows, concrete accents, and molded course. A 1951 photo shows the front was similar in design. According to a plaque on the south elevation of the building, this was called the Sam Dunie Building. In 1918, a grocery was located in 225 S. Main Street and People's Bank and a clothing store were located in the remainder of the building. Retail stores still occupied the building

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in 1925 and 1940. In the 1950s, this was the Levinson Department Store (1914 electric service map; Sanborn maps; owner information; documentary photos).

301 S. Main Street. Waccamaw Bank. Non-contributing. 1947; alterations 1967.

This massive, square, two-story building originally had a much different appearance, which can be seen in documentary photos. The early Modern Movement building was brick, with a center bay of concrete on the west elevation which extended from the first to the second floor and a concrete water table. There was a band of windows at the upper level, and glass block windows on the west façade and north elevation of the first floor. Little of this original appearance remains. The upper portion has been stuccoed and all original window openings are changed to tall, narrow openings. There is a flat awning at the central west entrance. A bank drive-through has been added at the northeast corner in the rear, and an exposed aggregate one-story addition housing the safes has been added on the south side. This building opened as Waccamaw Bank in 1947, but was completely remodeled in 1967 to its present appearance. According to newspaper accounts, the grand re-opening took place on July 30, 1967. Since that time, the bank ownership has changed hands several times, but it has remained as a banking institution (documentary photos; owner information; interview with Curtis McGirt).

305 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.

This two-story Italianate-style brick building has a parquet pattern of brick at the cornice, with corbelling above. Brick corbelling also extends across the width of the building above the storefront. New brick supports have been added at the northeast and northwest corners where the building to the north was removed to make room for the bank addition. The storefront appears to be original, with the only change being the addition of new brick aprons. The original double-leaf recessed entry door remains. There are four window bays on the second floor with six-over-six windows with concrete sills, flat arches, and dentiled hoods. A metal awning has been added. The rear has a modern door added on the first floor, with window openings bricked in. There are six-over-six windows on the second floor. Retail stores occupied this building from 1925 to 1940, according to Sanborn maps. In the 1950s, Norge Appliance was located in the building (Sanborn maps; documentary photos).

307 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1940; alterations 1960s.

This two-story flat-roof, painted brick Italianate-style building has had several alterations, including a modernized storefront and the retrofitting of windows on the upper floor within the original openings, all dating from the 1960s based upon the materials and style of the changes. Storefront changes include the covering of all elements with wood, covering of the transom, and a modern door, but the deeply recessed entry configuration may be original. The building does retain its original brick dentiled hoods over the windows and corbelling at the cornice and above the storefront. A flat metal awning has been added. The rear of the building has three bays on each floor, with most openings boarded or altered. The building does not appear on Sanborn maps until 1940. In the early 1950s, Mitchell-Caudell Drugs occupied the building (Sanborn maps; documentary photos).

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309 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925.

This two-story Italianate-style brick building with a flat roof retains its original storefront with corbelling above, with the only change being the addition of a modern door. There is a basket weave brick pattern and a soldier course at the molded cornice, with corbelling and brick dentiled hoods above the windows. The three windows on the second story have been changed to horizontal-two-over-two sash, a 1960s change. There is a small one-story brick addition at the rear northeast corner. All window and door openings at the rear are boarded up. Retail stores occupied this building on the 1925 and 1940 Sanborn maps (Sanborn maps).

311-317 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Non-contributing. ca. 1918; alterations 1950s and 1990s.

This two-story brick building has been significantly altered from its original appearance, as seen in documentary photos from the 1950s. Originally, the building had elaborate molded window hoods and a bracketed pent-roof projecting from the roofline. Windows had concrete sills. The current brick façade is a replacement. The storefronts are also altered: to the south, a modern angled storefront, and to the north, a completely boarded storefront due to extensive fire damage in the late 1990s. The six window bays on the second floor are retrofitted into original openings on the north side and boarded on the south. Most door and window openings at the rear are boarded, but some brick drip molding is still intact over some of the windows. The 1918 Sanborn map notes there was a millinery in 311 S. Main Street and a general store in 317 S. Main Street. Stores continued to occupy the building, with a lodge hall noted in the second floor of 317 S. Main Street in 1940 (Sanborn maps; documentary photos).

319 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1918.

This two-story, flat roof with parapet Italianate-style brick building has brick detailing, including corbelling at the cornice and corbelled and projecting brick window hoods, similar to buildings elsewhere in the district, including 201-205 and 213 S. Main Street. The storefront has been changed from original configuration to a shallow angled recess with one side of the display windows boarded. The four window bays on the second floor are boarded, with deteriorated framing. All openings on the rear are boarded. According to Sanborn maps, a grocery occupied this building in 1918, with stores in 1925 and 1940 (Sanborn maps).

321 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1925; alterations 1950s.

This two-story flat roof with parapet and tile coping, brick Commercial Style building has three bays on the first floor and six on the second. The first-floor openings consist of a center roll-up garage door framed by large display windows. By the 1940s, all of the current openings were in place to accommodate the Jones & Huggins Pontiac dealership. When Belk-Hensdale occupied the building in the 1950s, the center bay became a recessed storefront entry, but the garage entry was restored by the 1960s. The framing around the openings was stuccoed in the 1950s, as appears in documentary photographs. Brick pilasters divide the upper-level between every two windows. Windows are framed in a lighter yellow brick, with a band of brick above that extends across the façade. Windows are boarded, but all original openings are intact. At the cornice, there is a contrasting panel of lighter brick above every two

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windows, with a red brick soldier course, and a band of angled red brick and lighter brick corbelling forming the cornice. The window detailing on this building is the same as on 404-406 S. Main Street, built about the same time. Brick on the south elevation has been painted and all window openings are bricked in, as they are at the rear. There is one garage bay opening at the northeast corner of the building at the rear which is currently in use. The 1925 Sanborn map notes that auto sales, repair, and storage occupied this building in 1925, with a store in 1940. In the early 1950s, Belk-Hensdale occupied the building, with Fairmont Auto Supply located there in the 1960s (Sanborn maps; documentary photos).

323 S. Main Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca.1945; alterations late 1960s.

This one-story painted brick commercial building has a flat roof with overhanging eaves, and has an angled floor plan with part of the building facing S. Main Street and part facing south to Red Cross Street. The northwest corner of the building is rounded. What appears to be the original single-light door faces S. Main Street, and large display windows extend to the east, wrapping the corner onto the south side of the building. There is a two-story concrete block wing at the rear, also with a flat roof, which originally housed the service bays for the gas station. These two bays were infilled with concrete block in the late 1960s. This building appears on photos from the early 1950s, replacing an earlier service station in the same location (Sanborn maps; documentary photos; owner information; interview with Curtis McGirt).

East Thompson Street, north side:

101 E. Thompson Street. Depot. Contributing. ca. 1898; alterations 1970s and 1990s.

This one-story, frame, side-gable-roof building is only minimally altered from its original design. It appears, based on Sanborn maps, that a small portion on the southwest corner, which housed the office, was removed in the 1970s, along with a portion of the platform surrounding the building. Sanborn maps indicate that by 1925 this platform had completely surrounded the building. The handicap ramp at the southwest corner was added in the 1990s to meet current code requirements. Walls are board and batten, and the original portion of the passenger and freight platform remains on the north side of the building. The metal roof with deep eaves is supported by slender, curving knee brackets, plain knee brackets in the east gable end, and the rafter ends are exposed. Delivery doors are the original flush diagonal-board double-doors, and windows on the west end are modern horizontal two-over-two sash with simple wood framing. Built when the Atlantic Coast Line Railway first made its way into North Carolina, the depot and the railroad marked the beginning of the commercial boom for Fairmont as a tobacco and cotton market. Originally, there was an additional platform and covered shed on the east side of the building, holding cotton and tobacco ready for shipping. It was removed in the 1970s when a fire destroyed many of the wood-frame storage buildings along the tracks. The depot served as both a freight and passenger station, and was active until the early 1980s when the tracks were removed, leaving only the right-of-way for the tracks which runs to the northwest of the depot building. Sometime after 1991 the remaining tracks to the south of the building were also removed. Even though there have been some changes through the years, the building retains acceptable architectural integrity on the exterior and the interior. Although part of the operations of the depot, the cotton shed and additional platform were not connected to the building,

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as shown on Sanborn maps and documentary photos (Sanborn maps; documentary photos; interview with Curtis McGirt by Sybil Argintar, October 2009).

East Thompson Street, south side:

100 E. Thompson Street. A. N. Mitchell and Sons. Contributing. 1943; alterations ca. 1991.

This simple one-story commercial brick building, which originally housed the offices of A. N. Mitchell and Sons, has a new metal side-gable roof that replaces the original flat roof. The front of the building, facing north on East Thompson Street, is four bays wide, with two narrow doors with transoms in the center flanked by tall eighteen-light, metal-frame windows with concrete sills and a band of soldier-course brick above. There is a rear entry door which matches the front, with a twelve-light metal-frame window on the west and two small four-light windows to the east. A shed-roof metal awning is located above the front and rear doors. A. N. Mitchell and Sons was a cotton brokerage business (Sanborn maps; interview with Harry Mitchell, age 90, son of original builder).

West Thompson Street, south side:

107 W. Thompson Street. Commercial Building. Contributing. ca. 1945.

This simple one-story building has a brick façade and a flat parapet roof. There is a single decorative band of angled brick at the cornice. The single original storefront bay has a recessed entry door with transom flanked by display windows, all with the original, rounded, aluminum framing. The east and south elevations are concrete block. The rear of the building is three bays wide, with all openings boarded. This building was in use as the newspaper office in the 1960s (Sanborn maps; interview with Curtis McGirt).

Walnut Street, west side:

200 Walnut Street. Big Brick Warehouse. Contributing. 1931; addition ca. 1940.

This massive brick industrial building with a shallow gable roof and stepped parapet walls, takes up half of the block bordered by E. Thompson Street on the north, S. Main Street on the west, Center Street on the south, and Walnut Street on the east. The building has ten bays facing Center Street, six bays on Walnut Street, five bays on E. Thompson Street, and three bays revealed on its west elevation. The west section of this building was constructed in 1931, with the flat-roof addition to the east made soon after, according to the 1940 Sanborn map. All loading doors are flush board with steel lintels, and all windows are currently boarded. The interior of the 1931 section of the building has wood roof trusses and steel trusses in the addition. Floors throughout are concrete. The building, as denoted on Sanborn maps, is "filled with skylights." According to the current owner, in addition to tobacco sales, mules were also sold in the building (signage remains). There was a fire in the west section and some wood posts were replaced at that time. The Big Brick Warehouse was one of the largest tobacco warehouses in Fairmont, replacing an earlier frame building. Built of brick with both wood and steel framing and hardwood and concrete floors, this style of warehouse replaced many of the earlier ones, and is the only remaining warehouse adjacent to the downtown (Sanborn maps; owner information).

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Summary

The Fairmont Commercial Historic District in Fairmont, Robeson County, North Carolina, meets National Register Criterion A for its association with the commercial development of Fairmont in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, when the tobacco market in the town was considered to be one of the largest bright leaf markets in the region. The district also meets National Register Criterion C as a significant collection of Italianate, Commercial Style, and Modernist buildings, with elaborate brick detailing alongside streamlined buildings, exhibiting the range of architectural design in the town throughout its period of significance. The Fairmont Commercial Historic District is particularly notable for a distinctive building design in the use of an early twentieth-century interpretation of the typically late nineteenth-century Italianate style with detailing that is much more elaborate than is typical of this time period. The district has a period of significance from ca. 1898, the date of construction of the earliest resource in the district, the depot, to 1960, the date of construction for the most recent historic resource, the Floyd and Floyd Building at 200 S. Main Street.

Historic Background and Commercial Context

Robeson County, the largest county in the state of North Carolina, was founded in 1787 from a part of Bladen County and named for Colonel Thomas Robeson of the Revolutionary War. Lumberton, the county seat, and only city in the county, is located approximately fifteen miles north of Fairmont. From early in its history Robeson County has been primarily an agricultural county, with its chief crops including tobacco, cotton, corn, and sweet potatoes.

Previous to the founding of the town of Fairmont, the community was known by two other names. Soon after the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad arrived in 1898 from Elrod, a community to the southwest, the town, founded on February 27, 1899, was known as Union City.¹ The first mayor of Union City was Robert Edward Lee, and the town commissioners were Charles B. Thompson, Alford Lafayette Jones (builder of the A. L. Jones Building 201-205 S. Main Street), and John P. Brown.² The second name for the town was Ashpole, which was founded on February 8, 1901.³ The town of Fairmont was not founded until February 7, 1907.⁴

Initially, the town grew due to the lumbering industry, but quickly became a center for tobacco sales and transport with the arrival of the railroad. In 1899, when the town was named Union City, the first tobacco sales warehouse, operated by T. F. Reeves, E. J. Chambers, J. D. Kyle, and Charles R. Traynham, was

¹“Fairmont Goes Through Three Name Changes.” *Robesonian*, 22 February 1987. Elrod no longer exists as a town. The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad was a north-south train line which originated in Jacksonville, Florida.

² Taylor, Wiley R. Chairman, Fairmont History Committee. Unpublished notes, June 22, 1987. Available online at <http://www.fairmontnc.com.htm>.

³“Fairmont Goes Through Three Name Changes.” *Robesonian*, 22 February 1987.

⁴ Taylor, Wiley R. Chairman, Fairmont History Committee. Unpublished notes, June 22, 1987. Available online at <http://www.fairmontnc.com.htm>.

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built near the center of town by Southeast Lumber Company.⁵ The first tobacco market was held in August 1899, bringing hundreds to the town to sell their products.⁶ Wagons were loaded with tobacco and the streets were packed. In a 1905 advertisement paid for by the Ashpole Land and Improvement Company in the *Lumberton Argus* newspaper, the town was advertised as a good place to buy property for those who wanted to invest in "...the biggest tobacco market town in southeastern North Carolina, a prosperous town, and blessed with pleasant environments and with pure water gushing from artesian wells..."⁷ Dr. J. P. Brown was mayor of the town in 1905 and a member of Ashpole Land and Improvement Company. Businesses in the town at this time included A. J. Floyd, general merchant, located in a large double brick store, and E. V. McDaniel's general merchandise store, recently built and noted as "...a good brick store..."⁸ A second tobacco warehouse opened in 1906.⁹

At its incorporation in 1907, the dominant economic interests that supported the town continued to be leaf tobacco and cotton. The tobacco market was held every year in August, and until cotton diminished in production in the 1930s and 1940s, due to the advent of the boll weevil infestation, bales of cotton were also brought to Fairmont for sale and transport to markets west and north via the train. In 1907, there were two tobacco warehouses, a post office, a school, several cotton gins, a newspaper, a few churches, and a Masonic lodge. F. L. Blue was the mayor.¹⁰ According to an article in the *Raleigh News and Observer* which focused on Robeson County towns, Fairmont, in 1909, sold over 2,500,000 pounds of tobacco through the market. The cotton market was also going strong by this time, and Fairmont was considered to be a strong, healthy, growing town with many handsome brick buildings. The population, by this time, had reached 1,000 and the Southeastern Railroad, a branch line of the Atlantic Coast Line, was active, with four passenger and two freight trains daily. The town had telephone and telegraph service. According to this same article, five sawmills were located within the town, a cotton oil and fertilizer company was being planned, there were over twenty brick stores, two cotton gins, two iron and woodworking shops, and a race course for horses.¹¹ Businesses located in Fairmont at the time, according to newspaper advertisements, included White & Gough Department Store, the Bank of Fairmont, with \$10,000 in capital, Pittman Drug Company, A. J. Floyd's general store, and J. D. McLean & Company, clothing. The latter three businesses were located in brick buildings on Main Street.¹² The Robeson Warehouse opened in 1911, and by 1912, A. L. Jones, builder of one of the largest sawmills in town and a large real estate owner, had built one of the larger brick buildings on Main Street, at the corner of East Thompson and S. Main Street (201-205 S. Main Street). The *Fairmont Messenger*, in its January 25,

⁵ "Fairmont Goes Through Three Name Changes."

⁶ Taylor, Wiley R.

⁷ *Lumberton Argus*, 1905.

⁸ Ibid; and documentary photographs 1904 and 1910.

⁹ Purvis, P.C. "I Remember." Unpublished booklet. June 11, 2007, p. 2. Located in the offices of the Town of Fairmont.

¹⁰ *Our Heritage: Robeson County, North Carolina 1748 – 2002*. Walsworth Publishing Company, Inc, 2003, p. 37.

¹¹ "Fairmont." *Raleigh News and Observer*, Robeson County Supplement, April 6, 1910.

¹² Documentary photos from 1904 and 1910. Most of these buildings are gone, but they were located on the west side of Main Street.

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1912 edition, included advertisements for Lorena Lewis, milliner, Pittman Drug Company, J. D. McLean & Company, clothing, Bank of Fairmont, W. F. Mitchell Grocery, W. B. Brice & Son Wagons, A. J. Floyd, general store, and Fairmont Furniture Company. Fairmont Light & Power Company was founded on September 10, 1913, with a full plant in operation by February 1914. The town then had electricity, including street lights downtown, and many homes and businesses began receiving electrical services.¹³ By 1914, there was also a movie theater on Main Street, the Dixie Motion Picture House, which ran three to four movies every night, and People's Tobacco Warehouse was in operation. Fairmont had eighteen stores by 1915, including dry goods stores, groceries, hardware stores, barber shops, banks, millinery stores, department stores and drug stores, as well as medical offices, five churches, and two grade schools, one colored.¹⁴

The tobacco market, often known locally as "yellow gold," continued to thrive in the 1920s, with twenty-three warehouses in the town by that time and a total of six million pounds of tobacco sold in one year in the latter part of the decade.¹⁵ The mayor of Fairmont in 1920 was E. Fisher. There were two banks at this time, Bank of Fairmont and People's Bank & Trust Company. Types of businesses included boarding houses, shoemakers, tobacco warehouses, garages, press clubs, merchants, plumbers, and electricians. The town had a designated fire district encompassing ninety feet to the east and west of S. Main Street and from the depot to the First Baptist Church on Main Street, with a second district encompassing ninety feet to the north and south of Center Street where only brick or concrete buildings could be built, with the exception of temporary food and drink stands for tobacco market days, which had to be torn down after the market ended.¹⁶

By the 1930s, the town boasted thirty businesses downtown including two general stores, two furniture stores, four auto sales shops, one bank, two drug stores, two barbers, four doctors, two lawyers, and two dentists.¹⁷ The town had grown enough to need to purchase their first fire truck, a large department store, Levinson's, was in operation, and the Capital Theatre had been built (now demolished). In 1931, 28,757,968 pounds of tobacco was sold at the market for \$11.47 per pound.¹⁸ The July 15, 1932 edition of the *Fairmont Times* included advertisements from Floyd & Floyd discount store, Robeson Sales Company, the Hotel Fairmont, McDaniel's Department Store (which was scheduled to open July 29, 1932), First National Bank, J. R. Collins & Sons grocery and hardware, Fairmont Drug Company, and McNeil Cleaners. The 1937 city directory for Fairmont, a small portion of which is on display in the town museum, lists seven clothing and general stores, several doctor's, lawyer's, and general offices, two groceries, two cotton gin companies, eight automobile sales and service businesses, one real estate

¹³ "Fairmont Turned On the Lights." *Fairmont Messenger*, August 13, 1913.

¹⁴ "Fairmont Goes Through Three Name Changes." *Robesonian*, February 22, 1987.

¹⁵ "Tobacco Synonymous with Town of Fairmont." Undated *Robesonian* article in museum scrapbooks.

¹⁶ Town Minute Books, May 10, 1920 – July 6, 1922. The types of businesses listed had their license and privilege taxes raised by the town at this meeting.

¹⁷ "Fairmont Goes Through Three Name Changes."

¹⁸ 1952 Farmer's Festival bulletin. Unpublished, located in town museum.

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company, one café, two drug stores, one cleaners, one hotel, one bank, one newspaper office, one furniture store, the telephone company, one beauty shop, and one tobacco company.¹⁹ The *Fairmont Times-Messenger*, on April 27, 1939, included advertisements for P. R. Floyd & Son fertilizers, Fisher Grocery, Fairmont Drug Company, Rawls Chevrolet, Williams Motor Company, Fairmont Stockyard, and Tedder's Grocery and Market.

The 1940s continued to be a time of growth and prosperity for Fairmont. A flyer produced by the South Carolina Economic Association in 1941 notes that Fairmont was the most progressive town in the Carolinas, with a population of 2,000, and the best tobacco and cotton markets.²⁰ It was served by paved roads in every direction, as well as the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, and visitors could find modern accommodations during the tobacco market in several modern hotels, the most well-known of which was the Hotel Fairmont (now City Hall).²¹ Webster's Pharmacy was also established on August 1, 1948 located in the building where the Weinstein Medical Clinic had been located (212-216 S. Main Street).²²

By 1950, the population of Fairmont had grown to 2,319 and this decade, perhaps more than any other, was the heyday of the tobacco industry, with 49,349,708 pounds sold in 1950 alone, at a price of \$57.61 per pound. With this kind of selling price, local merchants and other businesses in Fairmont thrived also, as farmers and others in the tobacco sales industry spent their earnings in downtown, which, according to the 1951 Farmer's Festival bulletin, included over fifty merchants.²³ Through the 1950s and 1960s, Fairmont continued to flourish, with the tobacco market bringing in thousands of visitors every summer. The Farmer's Festival, a town-wide celebration which began in 1950, was held every summer during the tobacco market days. Among other events, it included a parade featuring participation by a competitive array of floats, school bands, and community organizations, many parties and celebrations, and was one of the major celebrations in the town each year. Many families rented rooms to tobaccoists, farmers, and their families, and downtown was filled with activity.²⁴

Businesses in Fairmont continued to thrive into the 1980s, when demand for tobacco products began to diminish as the health issues caused by prolonged tobacco use became a public health concern. Since that time, Fairmont has struggled economically, but in recent years has become part of the Small Town Main Street network and is working towards revitalizing its downtown business district.

Fairmont, like other Robeson County towns, including Maxton and the county seat of Lumberton, experienced its heyday of commercial development from the arrival of the railroad in the late nineteenth

¹⁹ It is notable that Waccamaw Bank & Trust Company opened January 2, 1934, an indicator that the town was not as deeply affected by the Depression years as other communities across the state.

²⁰ Brochure located in the files of the town museum.

²¹ 1940 Sanborn Map.

²² *Our Heritage*, pp. 37-38.

²³ 1951 Farmer's Festival bulletin.

²⁴ Floyd, Charles. Lifelong Fairmont resident. Interview by Sybil H. Argintar, May 19, 2009.

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century through the middle of the twentieth century. However, in contrast to Fairmont, Maxton's commercial wealth resulted initially from the town's cotton market, and later, as an agricultural center due to its proximity to an extensive network of roads and railroads.²⁵ Lumberton grew in the late nineteenth century as a result of the development of the turpentine-manufacturing industry. The town was destroyed by fire in 1897, and rebuilt after the turn of the century with an economy that focused on cotton, tobacco marketing, and banking.²⁶ While many other towns in Robeson County experienced economic growth from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries, Fairmont's prosperous economy, based on the tobacco industry, far outpaced that of other towns in the county and region.

Architecture Context

The architecture within the Fairmont Commercial Historic District spans a construction period of approximately sixty years. The earliest building constructed in the district, the **Depot** at 101 E. Thompson Street (ca. 1898), is typical of depot design in the late nineteenth century. It is a frame building in a long, linear configuration, originally with an office at one end, and a platform on both sides. Fairmont, from the first decade of the twentieth century, built substantial brick buildings which replaced earlier frame structures and were indicative of the economic prosperity of the town as the cotton and tobacco markets in town continued to grow in the 1910s and 1920s. The earliest known brick building was completed in 1904, but the most active building boom took place in the 1910s and 1920s. Additional significant buildings were constructed, although in lesser numbers, from the 1930s through the 1950s. Tobacco warehouses, while initially of frame construction, were built of brick by the 1930s, as exemplified by the **Big Brick Warehouse** at 200 Walnut Street (1931; addition ca. 1940).

Several buildings in downtown Fairmont were built in the Commercial Italianate style, prominent nationally from 1840 to 1880. The style often included the application of brick ornamentation in the form of window hoods, denticulation, and bands of brick or limestone between windows and demarcating the floors.²⁷ A style not commonly used into the turn of the twentieth century, the Italianate buildings in Fairmont utilize many of these stylistic features, especially in the use of brick drip moldings delineating the windows, denticulated window hoods, pierced brick aprons, and bands of brick in contrasting colors around windows and at the cornices. Some notable examples of this style, due to their more decorative detailing, include the **Commercial Building** at 300-302 S. Main Street (ca.1910) with its elaborate façade of contrasting brown brick molding outlining the upper portions of the windows, a row of dentil blocks above the storefront, a row of projecting brick soldier course at the cornice, and intact storefront with a double-leaf glass-over-panel door and brick aprons; the **A. L. Jones Building** at 201-205 S. Main Street (1912), with highly decorative brick molding at the cornice and framing the upper part of the windows, including corbelled hoods with dentil blocks and protruding bands of brick, and an original storefront

²⁵ Little, Ruth. "Maxton Historic District." National Register nomination. NCSHPO, 1998, p. 8-21.

²⁶ Bisher, Catherine W. and Michael T. Southern. A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1996, p. 427.

²⁷ Blumenson, John J.-G. Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1981, p. 36.

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with a double-leaf, single-light-over-panel door framed by display windows and corbelled brick aprons; and the **Commercial Building** at 314 S. Main Street (ca. 1925) with highly detailed brick molding at the cornice and above the windows.

A few buildings in the district were built in the Commercial Style, a style prominent in American towns from 1900 to 1930. Generally a reaction to the more ornate Queen Anne or Romanesque Revival styles of the late nineteenth century, it maintained the basic commercial form of one or more storefront bays on the first floor and windows on the upper levels, but simplified the details. Ornamentation, if any, usually consisted of some patterned brick on facades or corbelling at the cornice. Parapet rooflines were common, along with large rectangular windows arranged in bands.²⁸ Buildings could be one, two, or three stories in height, with a flat or slightly sloping roof and parapet walls extending upward on the front or the sides if the building was located on a corner lot. Fairmont's Commercial Style buildings generally follow many of these basic trends, but, in some instances, are more ornamental than is usually seen in the style as exemplified by the use of bands of contrasting brick outlining windows, and some use of pierced brick aprons on storefronts. A good example of the Commercial Style is the **Commercial Building** at 404-406 S. Main Street (ca. 1925) with its four distinct bays on the first floor delineated by brick pilasters with a triangular concrete base, original storefront with a recessed entry flanked by large display windows, tin ceiling in the entry, original leaded glass transoms, and windows that are framed by contrasting lighter brick.

The buildings in the district built in the 1950s are more characteristic of the Modern Movement in terms of architectural design. This movement continued the idea of the simplification of detailing on a building to achieve a sleek look showcasing materials such as aluminum panels, decorative pierced concrete panels, and long vertical bands of windows, along with new construction techniques, such as the curtain wall, which allowed for broad expanses of windows sometimes covering an entire elevation. Many of these buildings utilized "fireproof" construction and were built of either solid masonry or with steel framing. Examples of Modern buildings in Fairmont include: **Rawl's Motor Company** at 100 Byrd Street (1952) with its streamlined square massing, semi-circular single-car showroom at the front, plain stucco walls, and multi-light, metal frame, awning-style windows; and the **Floyd & Floyd** office building at 200 S. Main Street (1960) with its asymmetrical masonry construction, recessed entry with pierced concrete wall, and glass block and corrugated glass windows.

²⁸ Jackson, Mike. "Storefronts on Main Street: An Architectural History." *Illinois Preservation Series*, Number 19, not dated.

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Additional UTM's

- 5. 17 673200 3818600
- 6. 17 673200 3818490
- 7. 17 673080 3818490
- 8. 17 673040 3818730

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries for this nomination are indicated on the accompanying sketch map by a heavy black line, at a scale of 1" = 100'.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the district include the largest concentration of contiguous contributing properties dating from the period of significance, ca. 1898 to 1960. Areas beyond these boundaries contain vacant lots and modern industrial and commercial buildings to the east, north and south, and residential neighborhoods to the west.

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Fairmont Commercial Historic District

The following information applies to all photographs, except where noted.

Name of property:	Fairmont Commercial Historic District Fairmont, Robeson County, North Carolina
Photographer:	Sybil H. Argintar
Date of photos:	April 2009
Location of original digital images:	North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office Raleigh, North Carolina

1. S. Main Street, view northwest
2. S. Main Street, view southwest
3. Center Street, view northeast
4. Depot, view north.
5. 106 S. Main Street, view west
6. 300-302 S. Main Street, view west
7. 306-308 S. Main Street, view west
8. 402 and 404-406 S. Main Street, view southwest
9. 309 S. Main Street, view east
10. 200 Walnut Street, view northeast